

THE RICHMOND DISPATCH.

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SUNDAY.....FEBRUARY 13, 1898.

OUR SISTER "REPUBLICS."

A contemporary remarks that "the assassination of Barrios, President of Guatemala, is a fate which any South or Central American tyrant has to face."

To put it more correctly and comprehensively, however, assassination is a fate which the head of any government in Central or South America has to face, whether he be a tyrant or not. It is true that Barrios seems to have been the victim of a spirit of personal revenge, rather than of a political plot; but Guatemala has, for two years, been in the normal state of the average South and Central American republic—a state of rebellion—and the chances are that Barrios only escaped being taken off by the agents of some opposition fellow who wanted his job, because convenient opportunity for performing the taking-off act did not present itself.

That Barrios was a tyrant there is no question, but in this respect he did not differ from the general run of worthies who have administered the affairs of South and Central American States, except republics. The cold fact is, that taking the governments of these States by and through, they are about as broad a travesty upon republican institutions as could well be imagined. The regular course of things would be seriously interrupted should order reign in all the States simultaneously for any extended period. Indeed, we do not believe that that condition has ever existed. No sooner do we hear that rebellion has been put down in one "republic," or group of "republics," than news comes of revolution or rebellion in another quarter or other quarters, and not infrequently it is impossible to tell, without tracing matters through a long series of outbreaks, who are really the rebels and who are the constituted authorities. Even Brazil, which of all the South American States was supposed to possess the best foundation upon which to build a true republic, has been practicing in a continual state of unrest ever since Pedro was ousted, and a "republican form of government" was established. Just now, in addition to the disquiet in Guatemala, there are revolutions in progress in Nicaragua and Costa Rica, while in South America Uruguay is on the verge of another upheaval and minor disorders are scattered about promiscuously. The sum of the whole business is, it seems, that it is still a far cry to the day when the people of the average South or Central American State will be capable of self-government, and will not have to be ruled by a dictator, if they are to have any form of government at all for any length of time. In short, experience would seem to present to most of our sister "republics" the choice between dictatorship and anarchy.

HAS A FUTURE.

The general impression is that when the British planted the Italians in the Red Sea littoral to guard the Massowah approach to the Sudan, they gave their proxies a very unpropitious and barren possession. Well, in a sense, the Italians did find the possession a very inhospitable one. What with the Abyssinians and the dervishes, the Italians had in Eritrea anything but a hospitable reception. But, according to a correspondent of the London Times, who has been doing the country, the province is not barren, and has a paying future before it.

The port, Massowah, says the correspondent, "undoubtedly the pleasantest place on the Red Sea," has broad quays, handsome barracks, hospitals, and other public buildings, together with numerous large warehouses belonging to Italian, Greek, Arab, and Indian merchants. A railroad has been built seventeen miles into the interior, and from its terminus there is an excellent cart road nearly to the western frontier. The military stations and settlements consist of substantial stone or brick houses, with tiled roofs, and canteens where the traveller finds comfortable lodging and a good meal. Beyond the coast plain is a fertile country, in which are large fields of barley and great numbers of well-favored cattle, camels, and goats. Of Kassala, once a prosperous city of 40,000 inhabitants, the dervishes have left "only ruined walls and deserted jungle-overgrown streets, which are still strewn with the bones of the massacred citizens and garrison," the only building of consequence remaining being a cotton factory erected at the time of the Egyptian occupation. A new town of straw huts and a

few brick warehouses has, however, sprung up around the fort. The surrounding plain is exceedingly fertile, and shows abundant signs, in irrigating dams miles in length, and countless wells, of former careful cultivation.

The correspondent is satisfied that once secured from dervish raids, the country will again produce large crops of cotton, sugar, tobacco, coffee, and dhurra. And to that complexion it will doubtless come when the reconquest of the Sudan shall have been consummated and uninterrupted communication thence to Massowah shall have been re-established.

A NEEDED REFORM.

In view of the fact that some of the "drawing cards" at agricultural fairs in various sections of the country have been influenced by the style of show of the Midway Plaisance at Chicago, many agricultural societies are taking the matter under consideration to the end of instituting reform. In Indiana fair associations had, it is stated, generally been prosperous till they admitted immoral exhibitions, but their prosperity then almost immediately ceased; and now twenty-five of the leading organizations in the State have decided that henceforward all shows of the sort shall be rigidly excluded. The Massachusetts Agricultural Society has put itself on record as opposed to the introduction of the circus, the dime museum, and other meretricious auxiliaries at fairs, and it is announced that the movement is spreading throughout the North and West generally.

Certainly the reform is one greatly to be commended, and we hope that it will reach this section. Aside from the demoralizing influence upon public taste of such shows, we are satisfied that the experience of Indiana touching their effects upon the prosperity of fair associations is not singular. We believe that many of the Virginia fair associations that have gone out of existence, or are financially involved, would be able to-day to tell different stories if they had adhered to the legitimate purposes for which they were organized, and let "special features" severely alone. Therefore, we would urge the authorities of such of our agricultural associations and societies as still exist to join the reform movement. Let them determine that, henceforth, they will have none of fairs, dime museums, and like reprehensible shows in connection with their annual exhibitions, but will give the people old-fashioned agricultural fairs, where fine stock, and the products of the field, the garden, the dairy, and examples of domestic industry will be the "star attractions."

If they will pursue this policy the result will be, we question not, a revival among the farmers of interest in the agricultural fair, such as will pay in the end.

The Virginia Citizen, published at Irvington, Lancaster county, does not take kindly to the determination of the Post-Office Department to extend the money-order system generally. The Citizen's experience is that the money-order is a snare and a delusion, and it does not believe that the people in the rural districts where the system obtains are wedded to it. It is true, says the Citizen, that some find it a little more convenient than the method of registered letters, but its expense militates much against the management of country offices. To the postmaster it is a nuisance, and to the waiting public it is a torment. Two or three money-orders to be issued before the "boat comes" or the mail is ready to leave occupies the entire attention of the postmaster, while a crowd of anxious people, wishing stamps or their mail, must pat their feet and walk off sole leather. The compensation, adds our contemporary, of 2 or 3 cents per order is beggarly, and in many places where the system has been instituted in the country it is impossible to get good business-men to take the offices. Three or four demands for money-orders per diem would necessitate the employment of an additional clerk.

There, unquestionably, seems to be a good deal of force in the Citizen's observations.

Recently Atlanta, Ga., complained of being affected with the flirting nuisance, and we suggested that she might abate the nuisance by securing one of our discarded anti-flirtation bills. It now appears, however, that Atlanta flirtation has developed into a kissing fad, and we make haste to withdraw our suggestion. We would not have Atlanta acquire, even for a mere song, a piece of legislative junk that would be utterly worthless to her. Our anti-flirtation bills are not only not built to prevent kissing, but there is no way of putting an anti-kissing attachment on them. Their constructors were too old fogey even to contemplate such a higher development of flirtation as the Atlanta kissing fad.

The Salem Times-Register, in discussing the question of "Retrenchment and Reform," says that the Legislature must face this issue without flinching, and those to whose incomes the pruning-knife is applied will do well to bear it without kicking. Every man, it continues, must bear his part of the present liabilities, and learn to "live and let live."

This is the sentiment of the press of Virginia generally, and the people are behind the press. Moreover, the people will stand behind the Legislature if that body stands up to the rack.

"Babe" Bailey is by no means in political leading strings, as his nickname might suggest. He is himself a leader who really leads. His Democratic infantry, moreover, invariably routs the enemy, horse, foot, and dragoons. He will be heard with great pleasure here on the 23d, as he has been before. The Assembly is to be congratulated on the invitation it has extended to him. We trust our assumption that he will accept the invitation is well founded.

Dr. C. Schick contributes to the "January Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund," a very interesting paper on the "nameless city," or Ramah, the home of the prophet Samuel. Contrary to the opinion of most authorities, who have placed the city upon one of the heights a few miles to the north of Jerusalem, Dr. Schick believes that a hill between Bethlehem and Hebron corresponds better to the obscure indications of the Bible narrative.

It doesn't seem unreasonable to question whether our apples are more dangerous to the health of Germany than the German wines we import are to the health of this country. Adulteration is well known to be a practice in the German wine trade. You can't adulterate an apple.

There are not a few now who believe that Zola is probably better than his books.

GRAVE OMISSIONS.

The majority report of Elections Committee No. 3 in the contested congressional election case of Thorp vs. Epps is not an original document. It is the same old story of making the figures count your own way by hypothesis, of assuming that because there are more negroes than whites in the district the Democrat was defeated, and of special pleading for purity and honesty in elections.

The figures remind one forcibly of Brother Dingley's tariff calculations, and we do not question that when the other side is presented the exhibit will demonstrate to any unbiased mind that, as a Republican said about a previous contested election case from Virginia, there is not enough evidence of fraud practiced against the contestant to hang a yellow dog.

In the plea for honest elections there is one very notable omission. Not a word is said about Mark Hanna's barrel. The zealous labors of Mark's special agents to secure honest elections and the return of Republican candidates by debauching the electorate through the barrel influence, are entirely ignored. Nor is the little bulldozing diversion that the Republicans and their allies indulged in as a gentle hint to corporation employees honored with mention. Really, considering much of the contents of the document, we cannot account for these grave omissions, save on the ground that the majority intend to bring in a supplemental report devoted exclusively to this feature of honest elections in Virginia. We cannot think that the slight of Hanna and his emissaries was intentional, and that such a golden opportunity for the majority to descend further on the purity of the ballot was deliberately slighted.

The headline in an Elmira paper reporting a suicide reads: "Why William Hanson Drank Poison—He Once Lived Here." This is the first intimation we have had of the desirability of Elmira as a place from which to remove oneself. Dave Hill also once lived in Elmira.

Buffalo is thinking of annexing Tonawanda, Portsmouth talks sometimes nowadays about annexing Norfolk, and if we don't look out on this side of the James, Manchester will before long be talking of annexing Richmond.

There is enough of the billybumbum party left in Indiana to consider the question of putting a State ticket in the field, but this is probably the whole story. The considering will be done on the 22d.

Lincoln's birthday—February 12th, is a legal holiday in the States of Connecticut, Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

It would seem that M. de Lome was prominent enough without making himself so conspicuously de trop.

The trading stamp is being stamped out everywhere.

Why did De Lome so hurry?
His letter sprang a mine,
But waiting might have made it
A comic valentine.

A Much-Discovered Pole.

Reader: Oh, yes; I have travelled a great deal in my time; it was not very long ago that I visited the much-talked-of Pole.

Pleaser: Don't say so! You must have suffered awfully from the rigors of that arctic climate.

Reader: Arctic climate? Why, I never met with a warmer reception in my life. The Pole I visited was Skleniewicz, the author of "Quo Vadis."

Exchanged Places.

Judge: If I mistake not, I have seen your face before.

Prisoner: Very likely, your Honor.

Judge: And if my memory serves me right, it was in this court, too.

Prisoner: Quite probable, sir; it is but six years ago that I graduated from the very bench that you now occupy.

Not Worth Keeping.

Miss Chicago: I never could endure skating; you see, I can't keep my feet.

Miss St. Lou: I'm sure I wouldn't worry about that; if I were you, I'd be glad to exchange them for a pair a size or two smaller.

Comparatively Easy.

Politician: You must remember in this connection that political influence is not everything. Outside of all that, you will have to pass a civil-service examination.

Applicant: That's easy; I passed a cafe this morning.

An Echo.

Dumbleton: You read the European intelligence, of course.

Flasher: Certainly.

Dumbleton: What are your conclusions in regard to the affair of Esterhazy?

Flasher: Hazy.

Designating His Genus.

Lipper: Don't you think that Jabberly is something of a wag?

Chipper: Decidedly; a sort of scalawag.

We suppose that on a race-course a dead heat turns a winning-post into a post-mortem.

Some people are never more content with their fare than when it's fowl.

The caution we commend in ourselves becomes cowardice in another.

When a man eats a peach he must expect to feel down in the mouth.

Literary Notes.

A new edition of "The Poetical and Prose Works of Lord Byron," in twelve volumes, is published by the Scribners. It is edited by Messrs. E. Hartley Coleridge and R. E. Prothero. The edition includes much material that has never been published before.

It is said that the author of the Prince of Wales's biography is Mrs. Lowndes, whose maiden name was Miss Marie Belloc. The biography will be published immediately by the Appletons.

A new novel by Maarten Maartens is finished. Its title is, "Her Memory."

A biography of Sir Frank Lockwood, illuminated with anecdotes and caricatures, is being written by Mr. Augustine Birrell.

A biography of the Duchess of Teck will be written.

Professor Child's "English and Scottish Popular Ballads" has been completed in ten parts, and they will now be grouped in five imperial quarto volumes and published by Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. The work has been carried through the press by Professor Kittredge, of Har-

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ward, who has prefixed a biographical sketch of the late editor.

Messrs. Henry Holt & Co. announce that Jerome K. Jerome's "Sketches in Lavender, Blue, and Green" is in its fourth American edition.

"Vanity Fair," with all the original illustrations, is being hawked in the streets of London for the sum of one penny, says the New York Critic. We never expected to see Becky get down as low as that.

Sir Gavan Duffy's autobiography will contain letters from Thackeray, Newman, John Foster, and Leigh Hunt, and will describe meetings with Browning, John Stuart Mill, and Sir Henry Parkes. It will also throw a good deal of new light on Mangan, the poet, whom Sir Gavan knew well.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson, the Norwegian poet, is moved to praise M. Zola for his action in the Dreyfus case. "We see now," he writes, "that while your works have been spread over the world to increase the valor and enrich the heart of humanity, you are yourself a man of courage and heart." This appears to be a highly poetic description of Zola's works.

Under the title of "Auld Lang Syne," Professor F. Max Muller's series of recollections, originally contributed to the pages of Cosmopolis, will be published immediately by the Scribners.

It is announced that Mr. Frank R. Stockton has written a love-story, which will be published by the Scribners. Its title is "Coburn." As Mr. Stockton is now past 60, he will hardly be forgiven.

A complete edition of Charles Lever's novels, in thirty-seven octavo volumes, edited by his daughter, Mrs. Neville, is announced by Messrs. Roberts Brothers. More than six hundred etchings and drawings from the original plates of "Phiz" and Cruikshank will be inserted. Besides the wood engravings of Luke Fields, M. E. Edwards, and others, and some new illustrations by Gordon Browne, a son of "Phiz." The edition will be limited to sixty numbered sets.

A bust of Mark Twain was made while he was in Rome recently. It is a little surprising to see Mr. Clemens enshrined like the Christoforo Colombo by getting "on a bust" so soon after the one which he is still trying to pay out of.

The Idler, Jerome K. Jerome's magazine, has been purchased by Messrs. J. F. Dent & Co. It is thought that Mr. H. G. Bromhead will be the editor hereafter.

Literary earnings are always interesting, as, indeed, are any other sort. The Paris correspondent of the London Daily News says that the French author whose works brought in most money in his lifetime was Victor Hugo. Their sale has been still growing since his death. In that time they have brought in \$1,200,000. Louis Blanc sold the copyright of his "History of the Revolution" for \$100,000, and the same sum was obtained by Thiers for his royal octavo, thirty-two pages, with six fac-similes from originals by Poe.

The manuscripts which Daudet left behind him include, besides several short stories and pages of personal reminiscences, a novel entitled, "Quinze Ans de Mariage."

The London Academy has awarded its first prize, 100 guineas, to Mr. Stephen Phillips's volume of poems. It is claimed that in Mr. Phillips a new poet has been discovered.

The Harpers will publish a book by J. A. Owen (Mrs. Visger) called "The Story of Hawaii." A good many stories

are being published about Hawaii at present.

"The Bible Story, Retold for Young People," is announced by the Macmillan Company. The book is illustrated with maps and pictures of scenes in Palestine.

The March Harper's will contain "Stirring Times in Austria, as Seen from the Parliament at Vienna," by Mark Twain. Scribner's will contain a new serial by Richard Harding Davis, entitled "The King's Jackal."

"What is Good Music?" is the title of a volume by Mr. W. J. Henderson, which will soon be published by the Scribners. An English translation of Dr. Kronenberg's "Kant, sein Leben und seine Lehre," is announced for early publication by the Macmillan Company. This book was published in Germany about a year ago, and is said to have gained at once general recognition as the best book to be put into the hands of general readers and beginners in the study of the Kantian philosophy.

Another early publication by the Macmillan Company will be "France," by John Edward Courtney Bodley. It will be in two volumes and will treat French literature with the same care and method as were given to those of this country by the "American Commonwealth," or to Russia by Mackenzie Wallace.

The Chap-Book will contain during this year a new series of "Letters to Dead Authors," by Andrew Lang.

"A Realized Ideal" is the title of a new novel by Miss Julia Magruder. Miss Magruder felicitates herself upon her choice of this title for her new book. "It seems to me," she says, "one of the happiest I have ever had." We hope the book's reception will be equally pleasing to her.

The February Atlantic contains an article upon the relations of the labor unions to the news which is contributed by John Stephens Durham, late United States Minister to Haiti. We have recently seen it stated that the Atlantic is not as vigorous as heretofore, and perhaps its choice of subjects for discussion in its pages may have something to do with its state of health.

The sale of Professor Drummond's "The Ideal Life," has, it is said, passed the twentieth thousand in this country and England. Dr. Robertson Nicol thinks that the volume commends itself to many readers more than any of Professor Drummond's other works.

"The Gospel of Freedom" is the title of a novel by Professor John Herdick, who occupies the Chair of English Literature in the University of Chicago. The Macmillans will publish it. The "motif" of the story is said to be that of "personal independence in its appeal especially to the restless, eager, egotistic woman of our new American civilization."

The scenes are laid in Paris, Chicago, and Florence.

"Sources of Greek History" by Anna Boynton Thompson, of Thayer Academy, will be published in the spring by the Macmillan Company.

To Stop Train-Robberies.

(New York Herald.)

Thirty trains held up last year! That's a pretty record for a civilized country like the United States.

In the last eight years 218 trains were held up and 145 passengers and train men shot, of whom seventy-eight were killed. In Mexico last year there was just one attempt to hold up a train, and that was unsuccessful.

Why this immunity in the southern republic? Because interference with a train is there made punishable with death. Train robbers and wreckers in our own country have little fear of State laws. When they cross the boundary line they are beyond reach of State officials, and often make good their escape before other authority can be invoked.

If the crimes referred to were brought under Federal jurisdiction, the criminals could be pursued by United States marshals or other officials, freed from present delays and hindrances, and railway travel here might soon become as safe as it is in Mexico!

The Constitutional Convention.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:

Dishonest minds may be weak, but they are never lacking in cunning. Honest men have nothing to conceal, hence they are frank, transparent, ingenuous; but dishonest men are always concealing their unworthy motives and purposes; they are simulators and dissimulators; their ingenuity is constantly taxed and strained to hide their true characters and their real object. By this constant practice they acquire at length incredible cunning. Never was there a better illustration of this truth than may be found in the manner of the construction of the Underwood Constitution. Its framers did their work in a masterful way. They took steps to provide that the instrument they were forming should be self-perpetuating. Their plan was a very cunning one, but full of wit to the good people of the Commonwealth. Reduced to its last analysis, it was a plan of bribery and corruption, not limited to that time, but intended to be operative through all coming time. So far it has proved effective, and I fear it will prove effective to the end.

(1) It has created a vast number of unnecessary, and hence hurtful, offices. The public service would be better performed with a third or a fourth of the officials demanded by the Underwood Constitution. These swarms of hungry office-holders are the pests of the people of the Commonwealth. We suffer by being taxed to support them, and also by the withdrawal of so many from the ranks of productive industry. Every man wants an office, and when an office is to be filled a dozen odd work to canvass for votes. The amount of money lost to the State by this greedy scramble for office is incalculable. And more than this, and worse than this, the moral tone and fibre of the people is weakened as they learn to look, not to honest labor, but to the public for support. Hence, the manifest decadence in the spirit, the courage, the self-reliance of the people. These office-holders—actual and expected—a mighty host, stand opposed to the abrogation of the Underwood Constitution. Like Demetrius, they rush to the advocacy of its perpetuity was effectively secured.

(2) But if one wishes to see fully the deadly drift of the Underwood Constitution, and to understand what means it employs to trench itself in popular support, let him study the cold figures of the reports of the Auditor of Public Accounts. He will there see that about two-thirds of the large amount wrong, by cruel and exhaustive taxation from an impoverished and despairing people is simply given away—given to the poor, given to the rich, given to all who will take it; given to every claimant, given promiscuously, and without proof, without questioning, without formality of any sort whatsoever!

Can the force of folly further go? It would seem that, rioting in excessive wealth, we are seeking by any device the means of getting rid of our claims. We have not got money to pay the men who do honest work for the Commonwealth; we are staggered and stand aghast at the coming increase in the rate of interest on our public debt; and yet we have given to the rich, can't help it, let us give it to those who need the public funds. Certainly, the most optimistic fatalism could demand nothing more. Doing this, we shall find that the State Treasury will be amply able to meet all its demands. By a plan so simple all the trouble vanishes.

When a demand, born of the distress of an impoverished and disheartened people, is made for the abrogation of the Underwood Constitution—the illad of our woes—the unnumbered beneficiaries of its bounty cry out against it. Thus by satiate cunning it provides for its own perpetuity. It has bribed its way to support. Thousands—many, many thousands—receiving money, or its equivalent, without paying the quid pro quo, are thus committed to its perpetuation. They fear they will lose the pop it has given them;

they wish to suck still longer the shrouled dugs of the Commonwealth; nor will they relax their hold until the old money stagers and falls from sheer lassitude. Within the last few days we have seen plainly enough from what sources the opposition comes, and it is just what might have been expected.

The present is not a suitable time for the change, it is said; but the conditions become more unfavorable with each passing day. Day by day the Constitution debases the morals and undermines the manhood of the people.

To-day is the time for action, not to-morrow. It is true, we are weak to-day, but stronger than we will be to-morrow. It is now or never. If we fail or fail now, the end is reached. There is no hope, no help, no remedy. We must submit to be pillaged and plundered to the bitter end. For thirty years we have pursued the plan of procrastination, and yet the more favorable time has never come. To-day is the day of salvation, and the only day. To-day, to-day, to-day!

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, creeps in this petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of recorded time.

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death.

H. PURTELL.

Madison Mills, Madison county, Va.

A Protest.

Norwood Post-Office.

Nelson County, Va., February 13, 1898.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:

My attention has just been called to the resolutions unanimously adopted by the Board of Supervisors of Shenandoah county on the 5th instant condemning the bill before the Legislature for placing the Valley Turnpike under the control of the county through which it passes.

The Valley pike and the Natural Bridge